

MDBA
GPO Box 3001
Canberra, ACT, 2601.

15th of December 2010.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Concerned about The Murray Darling Basin Plan.

The Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) has caused a lot of unnecessary stress and grief to landholders and communities already depressed by years of drought. The MDBP was released when financially our farm business, and many others and our community were on their knees.

Some confidence was entering our community, with good spring rains, this gave our community and our farm business some hope to earn money again, and then the MDBP gave rise to bewilderment and fear of **whether we could rely on the government to step in, and do the right thing.**

Our beautiful crops were appearing to finally equate to some financial gains, instead of pouring money into projects that failed, as had been the case for several years of drought. We were feeling as if the tides had finally changed. Instead of battering down the hatches and being conservative with spending/planning, we could have optimism and plan projects for the future. The MDBP squashed that and then as Mother Nature often does the rains came and squashed that too.

Dealing with nature is always a gamble, but dealing with the MDBP and the authorities that belief in the MDBP is more challenging. Our farm business has taken some knocks but we have tried to work with of our environment and farm wisely, as after all, we need to protect the soil structures to have soil to farm the next year and years to come.

This is my frustration we farm the earth and to protect our income, we farm with the sensibility to protect our future income, which means we try to protect the earth. We are raising a young family, 4 children, as we wish to see them all have opportunities, and whether that means coming home to the farm, or going onto tertiary education, or other forms of employment, we need to know we can earn a decent income, to protect those goals we have for our family. Thus, we try to be environmentalist on our property and work the best farm enterprise we can, and earn the best income we can within the boundaries of our farm land and that also means protecting our farm by using best practice.

We came to this farm 16 years ago and one of the first projects was to **fence the creek, and provide stock water by troughs, to protect the health of the creek systems, the Tuppal Creek.** We have seen the creek unhealthy and this was from some mismanagement, which allowed unclean high salt water into the creek, a man made problem. A passionate, strong farming group pressured the body who created this problem, and made them accountable for the quality of the water, which entered the creek. The Tuppal Creek has since been well maintained, the water that enters from another flood plain, in another district, is measured and shandied to ensure the water has the appropriate salt content.

The trees along the Tuppal Creek are healthy; the Tuppal Creek has been bone dry for several years and the trees have managed to remain healthy. Of course there is water in the creek now, and these beautiful trees would be enjoying wet feet, there root systems must be extensive to maintain dry feet for so long, and still appear healthy.

Contrary to what you of the Murray Darling Basin Plan must think of farmers and their communities, we are environmentalist. Our farm business is a member of the Environmental Champions in this region, getting recognition for farming using best practice. This is both satisfying and we meet with like minded people. We are trying to farm the soil and protect the soil, protect the soil for the next crop and the next crop, as we are genuinely interested in protecting our income to provide for our family, year after year.

I would be happy to host a gathering at our farm (with notice, as I work off farm, to contribute to the income!) to show off our property, the beautiful Tuppal Creek, and our beautiful neighbourhood. We are young farmers (41-43 years old!!) who love where we live and we have chosen this life, we just want a “**fair go**” to farm our property and earn enough income to provide for our family. **Water** gives us the capacity to earn an income and if you reduce our allocation of water, you severely reduce our income, which means the opportunities we wish for our children will also be reduced. If our income potential is reduced, so is our capacity to spend in our community. A reduced income also reduces our ability to improve the efficiency of our farm practices as we reduce spending. **The consequences of the MDBP are devastating to our farm business, and thus our family.**

Yours Sincerely,

TANYA CLARKE (concerned farm partner).